



Arizona Department of Water Resources

GROUNDWATER USERS ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tucson Active Management Area

JOHN MAWHINNEY
Chair

DAN M. OFFRET
Vice-Chair

VAL LITTLE

DEE O'NEILL

Minutes September 15, 2009

Members Present: John Mawhinney, Chair
Dan M. Offret, Vice-Chair
Val Little

Phoenix Staff Present: Matthew Beversdorf
Andy Fisher
Karen Hendriksen

Tucson Staff Present: Jeff Tannler
Mary Bauer
Christina Bickelmann
Laura Grignano
Diane Kusel

Others Present: Michael Block, Metro Water District
Kathy Chavez, Pima County
Anthony Cuaron, Town of Marana
David Crockett, Flowing Wells Irrigation Dist.
Jim Davis, Montgomery & Associates
Hector Conde, Concerned Citizen
Nancy Freeman, Groundwater Awareness League
Diana Kelts - Freeport-McMoRan Sierrita
Holly Lachowicz, City of Tucson – Ward 3
Priscilla Robinson, Former GUAC Member
Linda Smith, Tucson Water
Cindy Stefanovic, AZ State Land Dept.
Deborah Tosline, Bureau of Reclamation
Arnold Velasco, Freeport-McMoRan Sierrita
Claire Zucker, PAG

1. Call to Order

Chair John Mawhinney called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made.

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Val Little made a motion to approve the minutes of May 14, 2009. Dan M. Offret seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. **Wells 55 Online Database Presentation**

Phoenix ADWR staff from the GIS Application Development Unit were invited to give a demonstration on the Wells 55 database that is now available online. The Wells 55 database is a registry of wells throughout the state. All the information found in this database is either provided by the well owner or the driller; it is not necessarily validated by ADWR. In contrast, the information found in ADWR's Groundwater Site Inventory (GWSI) database is verified by ADWR hydrologists.

A simple search tool allows locating wells by individual well ID, owner name or spatial criteria, including groundwater basin, subbasin or cadastral (legal description). It allows a quick view of detailed information on a single well, including if it is linked to a GWSI site.

It also contains an interactive map tool that can zoom the map into a user provided address, cadastral or GPS coordinate. A custom buffer can be created at these locations. Custom select tools allow the user to interactively select wells on the map and display the results in a table. The map can be printed with a custom title and the search results can be downloaded to a Microsoft Excel file.

From either the Search page or the Map Results page, the search results table with the Well Registry summary data can be downloaded. The summary data includes X and Y coordinates that provides the information to display results with personal mapping software. The Details page allows the downloading of all the data for a specific well. The data can also be shared via email.

The Wells 55 and GWSI databases can be found at
<http://gisweb.azwater.gov/WaterResourceData>

4. **Conservation Program Activities Update**

Christina Bickelmann, Tucson AMA's Water Conservation Specialist, gave an overview of the outreach and program development activities she has worked on for FY2009.

Xeriscape Contest – Each year Christina solicits funds for the Xeriscape Contest from various entities throughout the Tucson community, thus requiring no contest funding from ADWR. She oversees all aspects of the contest and awards ceremony. The 2009 contest was conducted in partnership with Tucson Botanical Gardens. Tohono Chul Park had been the partner in past years. If the contest continues, 2010 will be the 10th annual event.

Water Wise Landscaping for Southern Arizona CD - This CD is a grant funded project for Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise Counties. Funds were made available through the Bureau of Reclamation, Tucson Water, and the Santa Cruz AMA.

The CD will include plants from all three counties' low water use plant lists and will be distributed to the public to encourage water-conserving landscaping and the use of low water use plants. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of 2009.

Drop Your Water Use – Tucson Water Xeriscape Demonstration Garden – Christina has been working with Tucson Water over the last couple of years to install a Xeriscape Demonstration Garden in front of Tucson Water's office building. She designed the landscape and secured irrigation and plant donations for the entire project.

Low Water Use Plant Lists – Christina oversees the Tucson AMA plant list, including the Drop Your Water Use (DYWU) version of the list. The plants on the DYWU list are arranged by water use number to encourage hydrozoning principles. Pima County Cooperative Extension and Tucson Botanical Garden are currently incorporating the DYWU program into workshops for landscape professionals and homeowners.

The Town of Sahuarita has recently adopted the Tucson plant list as their official regulatory list for commercial development.

Christina also worked on the Santa Cruz AMA plant list so that the data is similar to Tucson's plant list. The updated version was published in April 2009.

Web-related Assignments – Christina has been the lead for migrating the Tucson AMA information from the old website to ADWR's newly revamped website. She is also in charge of keeping Tucson's site current.

Christina is also working with the Statewide Conservation Office and with staff from other AMAs to develop conservation strategies that can be used throughout the state. The material is being arranged by different water users and industries for easy access and use.

Currently, information is being developed for use by different facilities on how to develop, implement and manage a water conservation plan, which includes a series of checklists and forms for evaluating a specific facility plan. These products are scheduled for piloting by local TAMA businesses.

An additional publication Christina is working on is the updating of a cooling tower publication originally produced in the early 1990's by Tucson Water. It has been peer reviewed and is awaiting graphics. The booklet should be made available online in late 2009 or early 2010.

Statewide Efforts – Part of the statewide efforts is to target communities to receive focused conservation assistance as part of ADWR's conservation plan. Christina's target city is Nogales.

As part of this effort, a presentation was given to the Nogales Mayor and Council in November 2008 on water conservation in addition to ADWR resources and programs. An audit training session was arranged for City of Nogales and Tubac Water Company staff to learn how to use ADWR equipment to detect distribution system leaks. The leak detection equipment was loaned to assist them in finding and repairing leaks.

Christina also initiated and participated in the first Santa Cruz AMA Project WET Festival at Nogales High School. The festival was a success with the Mayor, several City Council members, County Board of Supervisors, and other dignitaries attending the event.

The first ADWR Water Awareness Month (WAM) webinar series promoting water conservation was held in April 2009. Christina was responsible for securing sponsorship and arrangement of three of the five speakers.

She is actively participating in the development and implementation of the ADWR Statewide Conservation Plan, which includes web-based conservation tools designed to provide information to water users in various categories. This “took kit” will be used by communities in the AMAs and across the state to assist in meeting requirements and developing conservation plans.

Christina also sets up and staffs ADWR informational booths for various events held throughout the community during the year. Conservation materials, plant lists, etc. are distributed at these events as well.

She continues to serve on the City of Tucson Landscape Advisory Committee and actively participates in the Tucson Water Business Incentives Group, as well as attending quarterly meetings of the Statewide Conservation Sharing Group.

5. 2010 Groundwater Withdrawal Fee Rate Discussion/Recommendation

Each year the GUAC makes recommendations to the Director of ADWR on groundwater withdrawal fees for the upcoming year. Currently, \$2.50 per acre-foot is assessed in the Tucson AMA to assist the Arizona Water Banking Authority, and \$0.50 per acre-foot is assessed for conservation assistance and aquifer storage and subsidence monitoring activities, which are being conducted through a USGS contract. The conservation fee also funds Christina Bickelmann’s outreach and program development activities.

Dan M. Offret made a motion to recommend to the Director that the groundwater withdrawal fee for 2010 continue to be set at \$3.00 per acre-foot, allowing for \$0.50 per acre-foot to be collected for the Conservation /Augmentation fee. As part of the recommendation, members of the GUAC expressed their strong preference that Conservation/Augmentation fees collected within the Tucson AMA be used specifically for conservation assistance and monitoring activities that take place within the Tucson AMA. Val little seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Pinal GUAC Recommendation for Modification of Pinal Assured Water Supply (AWS) Rules

Jeff Tannler reported that AWS rules for each of the AMAs allow for credits for extinguishment of a Grandfathered Groundwater Right (GFR). There are different allocation factors used to determine the amount of credit given for extinguishments.

The Tucson AMA’s management goal is to reach safe-yield; the Pinal AMA’s management goal is somewhat different: to allow development of non-irrigation uses and to preserve the existing agricultural economy as long as feasible. Prior to 2007, the existing AWS rules for Pinal AMA allowed for the amount of credits issued for an extinguishment of a GFR to remain the same each year, with no reduction over time. In 2007 the Pinal rules were amended to allow for a gradual

reduction in the allocation factor used to calculate the amount of credits given for an extinguishment. The allocation factor would begin to ramp down beginning in 2010, down to zero in 2055.

Due to the recent downturn in the real estate market, development in the Pinal AMA has dramatically slowed. Several irrigation districts in the Pinal AMA were concerned that some landowners might prematurely extinguish their IGFRs in order to obtain the maximum extinguishment credits; actual commercial and residential development of the land may be several years away. Once rights are extinguished, the land can no longer be used for agricultural purposes; it was argued that this could result in a financial hardship for remaining IGFR holders in these districts.

ADWR proposed to amend the Pinal AWS rules such that the effective date of the first reduction of the extinguishment credit allocation factor would be delayed from 2010 until 2014. ADWR also proposed to increase the allocation factors for calendar years 2014 through 2016; no changes were proposed for the allocation factors for calendar years 2017 and thereafter. A public hearing on the proposed amendments was held in Casa Grande on September 14, 2009. It was anticipated that ADWR would shortly thereafter file a Notice of Final Rulemaking with the Governor's Regulatory Review Council .

7. Area Director Report

Progress has been made on the AMA Water Resource Assessments. Water use projections to the year 2025 for all five AMAs have been completed, and the accompanying text along with background material are currently being written.

In November 2008, Notices of annual Gallons-Per-Capita-Per-Day (GPCD) and Lost and Unaccounted (L&U) water were sent to large municipal water providers for the years 2000 through 2006. For non-designated large providers, the GPCD program becomes a moot point, because they are now required to enter the Modified Non-Per Capita Conservation Program (MNPCCP). Designated providers have a choice to stay in the GPCD program or enter into the MNPCCP. GPCD will continue to be tracked for those providers that are enrolled in the MNPCCP, but not as a compliance tool but to assess how effective the MNPCCP has been. It is hoped by the end of this year that GPCD notices will be sent to providers for 2007 and 2008.

At this point ADWR's budget stands at \$18.1 million. Some monies were transferred out the AWBA fund but went directly into the General Fund, not to ADWR. All agencies have been asked to provide 5, 10, 15 and 20 percent contingency plans addressing possible cuts, which could result in layoffs - possibly by the end of the calendar year.

Diane Kusel has been working on Recharge Program long-term storage account credits balances for account holders in the Tucson AMA.

2008 annual reports have been processed and all 2008 data has been entered. On-line annual reporting will be made available once again for Individual Users, Short Form Type 2 GFRs, and zero water use. ADWR is looking into making annual reports printable directly from the website.

The old ADWR website has been replaced with a new and improved version.

The State of Arizona is a “hot spot” for solar energy alternatives, and there has been the recent submittal of many proposals to build solar power plants in Arizona. Laura Grignano has been busy focusing on these solar issues and the aspects of how much water would be needed to operate a solar power plant. To learn more visit the website at:
<http://www.azwater.gov/AzDWR/WaterManagement/solar/default.htm>

8. Public Comment

John Mawhinney commented that since the legislature swept a significant amount of money from the AWBA for the General Fund, there is talk about the Central Arizona Water Conservation District filing litigation to prevent the removal of money from the AWBA to use for purposes other than what it was formed to accomplish.

Mr. Mawhinney reported the Tucson GUAC is lacking a fifth member. The Governor’s office is receptive to interviews being conducted and recommendations being made to fill this vacancy. Mr. Mawhinney has since contacted Brad DeSpain, who recently retired as director of Town of Marana Water, to ask if he would be interested in applying. Mr. DeSpain said he would consider it. Also, Dee O’Neill’s term will expire in January 2010, and her vacancy will need to be filled. Individuals wishing to be considered for appointment to the GUAC may contact Jeff Tannler for additional information. The Governor’s website for boards and commissions is found at
<http://azgovernor.gov/bc/Application07.asp>

*

*

*

Mr. Mawhinney posed the question, if the Tucson AMA Water Resources Assessment were to show that the Tucson AMA is not going to reach safe-yield by 2025, what should be the reaction of the GUAC? The management plans were meant to get the AMA to safe-yield by 2025. ADWR is currently undertaking the challenge of showing whether the goal is going to be met or not. Does ADWR believe they have the laws, and the resources, necessary to get us to safe-yield? Mr. Mawhinney noted that as an appointed advisory board, perhaps the members of GUAC should ask ADWR what the roadblocks are to safe-yield, and what it would take to give the agency the regulatory authority to see that the goal is met.

Mr. Offret commented that if it takes changing the current statutes to give ADWR more authority, he is very much in support of it.

Ms. Little commented that ADWR may feel there is insufficient legal authority to get to safe yield. But change cannot be legislated unless you have the will and support of the community. Perhaps the outcome of the assessment will trigger the community to think about what changes need to occur for the good of the region.

Priscilla Robinson suggested pulling together the GUAC members from each AMA to brainstorm on this idea before embarking on the next management plan. Tucson GUAC members are in favor of this suggestion and recommended that steps be taken to make it happen.

*

*

*

Mr. Mawhinney commented that since so much work went into bringing CAP water to the Tucson area, making sure water quality standards are met is very important. Recognizing that water quality regulation does not come under ADWR’s authority, he suggested contacting other

entities in the community, perhaps the U of A Water Quality Center or ADEQ, to attend a future GUAC meeting to address water quality issues.

Mr. Mawhinney continued by reporting that the AWBA has been in discussion with a couple of the Tucson Groundwater Savings Facility (GSFs) owners relative to increasing the amount of CAP water going into GSFs through differential pricing. He will know more about the progress on this after the September 16th AWBA meeting.

Nancy Freeman has been contacted by a couple of Southern Arizona legislators inquiring about having an educational meeting on water specifically for legislators.

Hector Conde provided a copy of the Pinal County Board of Supervisors Comprehensive Plan Update. Pinal County is exploring making a policy that would require a demonstration of physically available water supplies prior to approving an application for zoning or rezoning. This would be in addition to the State requirement for an Assured Water Supply for all subdivisions within AMAs.

9. Date and Agenda for Next Meeting

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. Potential agenda items include: 1) Discussion of the Draft AWBA 2010 Plan of Operation; 2) Presentation of Water Quality Issues within Tucson AMA; and 3) Update on the Assessment.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.